

## LEGISLATIVE BILL 260

Approved by the Governor April 8, 2009

Introduced by Rogert, 16; McGill, 26.

FOR AN ACT relating to claims against the state; to amend sections 29-3506, 81-8,210, and 81-8,227, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to adopt the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act; to redefine criminal history record information; to change provisions relating to tort claims under the State Tort Claims Act; and to repeal the original sections.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Sections 1 to 8 of this act shall be known and may be cited as the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act.

Sec. 2. The Legislature finds that innocent persons who have been wrongfully convicted of crimes and subsequently imprisoned have been uniquely victimized, have distinct problems reentering society, and have difficulty achieving legal redress due to a variety of substantive and technical obstacles in the law. The Legislature also finds that such persons should have an available avenue of redress. In light of the particular and substantial horror of being imprisoned for a crime one did not commit, the Legislature intends by enactment of the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act that persons who can demonstrate that they were wrongfully convicted shall have a claim against the state as provided in the act.

Sec. 3. In order to recover under the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act, the claimant shall prove each of the following by clear and convincing evidence:

(1) That he or she was convicted of one or more felony crimes and subsequently sentenced to a term of imprisonment for such felony crime or crimes and has served all or any part of the sentence;

(2) With respect to the crime or crimes under subdivision (1) of this section, that the Board of Pardons has pardoned the claimant, that a court has vacated the conviction of the claimant, or that the conviction was reversed and remanded for a new trial and no subsequent conviction was obtained;

(3) That he or she was innocent of the crime or crimes under subdivision (1) of this section; and

(4) That he or she did not commit or suborn perjury, fabricate evidence, or otherwise make a false statement to cause or bring about such conviction or the conviction of another, with respect to the crime or crimes under subdivision (1) of this section, except that a guilty plea, a confession, or an admission, coerced by law enforcement and later found to be false, does not constitute bringing about his or her own conviction of such crime or crimes.

Sec. 4. (1) A claimant under the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act shall recover damages found to proximately result from the wrongful conviction and that have been proved based upon a preponderance of the evidence.

(2) The following costs shall not offset damages:

(a) Costs of imprisonment; and

(b) Value of any care or education provided to the claimant while he or she was imprisoned.

(3) No damages shall be payable to the claimant for any period of time during which he or she was concurrently imprisoned for any unrelated criminal offense.

(4) In no case shall damages awarded under the act exceed five hundred thousand dollars per claimant per occurrence.

(5) A claimant's cause of action under the act shall not be assignable and shall not survive the claimant's death.

Sec. 5. If the court finds that any property of the claimant was subjected to a lien to recover costs of defense services rendered by the state to defend the claimant in connection with the criminal case that resulted in his or her wrongful conviction, the court shall extinguish the lien.

Sec. 6. Nothing contained in the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act shall preclude the state from providing services to the claimant upon exoneration, and the reasonable value of services provided shall be treated as an advance against any award or judgment under the act.

Sec. 7. A claim brought pursuant to the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act shall be filed under the State Tort Claims

Act.

Sec. 8. Nothing in the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act shall limit the claimant from making any other claim available against any other party or based upon any other theory of recovery, except that a claimant who recovers a claim under the act shall not have any other claim against the state based upon any other theory of recovery or law.

Sec. 9. Section 29-3506, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

29-3506 Criminal history record information shall mean information collected by criminal justice agencies on individuals consisting of identifiable descriptions and notations of issuance of arrest warrants, arrests, detentions, indictments, charges by information, and other formal criminal charges, and any disposition arising from such arrests, charges, sentencing, correctional supervision, and release. Criminal history record information shall include any judgment against or settlement with the state as a result of a wrongful conviction pursuant to the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act. Criminal history record information shall not include intelligence or investigative information.

Sec. 10. Section 81-8,210, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

81-8,210 For purposes of the State Tort Claims Act:

(1) State agency includes all departments, agencies, boards, bureaus, and commissions of the State of Nebraska and corporations the primary function of which is to act as, and while acting as, instrumentalities or agencies of the State of Nebraska but shall not include corporations that are essentially private corporations or entities created pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act or the Joint Public Agency Act. State agency does not include any contractor with the State of Nebraska;

(2) State Claims Board means the board created by section 81-8,220;

(3) Employee of the state means any one or more officers or employees of the state or any state agency and shall include duly appointed members of boards or commissions when they are acting in their official capacity. State employee does not include any employee of an entity created pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act or the Joint Public Agency Act or any contractor with the State of Nebraska;

(4) Tort claim means any claim against the State of Nebraska for money only on account of damage to or loss of property or on account of personal injury or death caused by the negligent or wrongful act or omission of any employee of the state, while acting within the scope of his or her office or employment, under circumstances in which the state, if a private person, would be liable to the claimant for such damage, loss, injury, or death but does not include any claim accruing before January 1, 1970, and any claim against an employee of the state for money only on account of damage to or loss of property or on account of personal injury or death caused by the negligent or wrongful act or omission of the employee while acting within the scope of his or her employment occurring on or after August 25, 1989, and any claim allowed under the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act;

(5) Award means any amount determined by the Risk Manager or State Claims Board to be payable to a claimant under section 81-8,211 or the amount of any compromise or settlement under section 81-8,218; and

(6) Risk Manager means the Risk Manager appointed under section 81-8,239.01.

Sec. 11. Section 81-8,227, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

81-8,227 (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, every Every tort claim permitted under the State Tort Claims Act shall be forever barred unless within two years after such claim accrued the claim is made in writing to the Risk Manager in the manner provided by such act. The time to begin suit under such act shall be extended for a period of six months from the date of mailing of notice to the claimant by the Risk Manager or State Claims Board as to the final disposition of the claim or from the date of withdrawal of the claim under section 81-8,213 if the time to begin suit would otherwise expire before the end of such period.

(2) The date of a qualifying pardon from the Board of Pardons, a final order by a court vacating a conviction, or a conviction that was reversed and remanded for a new trial and no subsequent conviction was obtained, whichever is later, shall be the date the claimant's claim shall accrue under the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act for purposes of complying with the notice and filing requirements of the State Tort Claims Act. The Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act applies to a claimant who would have had a claim if the act had been

in effect before the effective date of this act or who has a claim on or after such date. If a claimant had a qualifying pardon from the Board of Pardons, a final order by a court vacating a conviction, or a conviction that was reversed and remanded for a new trial and no subsequent conviction was obtained, before the effective date of this act, the claimant's claim shall accrue under the Nebraska Claims for Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment Act on the effective date of this act for purposes of complying with the notice and filing requirements of the State Tort Claims Act.

~~(2)~~ (3) If a claim is made or filed under any other law of this state and a determination is made by a state agency or court that the State Tort Claims Act provides the exclusive remedy for the claim, the time to make a claim and begin suit under such act shall be extended for a period of six months from the date of the court order making such determination or the date of mailing of notice to the claimant of such determination by a state agency if the time to make the claim and to begin suit under such act would otherwise expire before the end of such period. The time to begin a suit under such act may be further extended as provided in subsection (1) of this section.

~~(3)~~ (4) If a claim is brought under the Nebraska Hospital-Medical Liability Act, the filing of a request for review under section 44-2840 shall extend the time to begin suit under the State Tort Claims Act an additional ninety days following the issuance of the opinion by the medical review panel if the time to begin suit under the State Tort Claims Act would otherwise expire before the end of such ninety-day period.

~~(4)~~ (5) This section and section 25-213 shall constitute the only statutes of limitations applicable to the State Tort Claims Act.

Sec. 12. Original sections 29-3506, 81-8,210, and 81-8,227, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, are repealed.